



NEWS RELEASE

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WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FEBRUARY 28, 2006
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO MEXICAN MEN SENTENCED FOR TRANSPORTING ILLEGAL ALIENS

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that two Mexican nationals were sentenced in federal court today for operating a business of transporting illegal aliens within the United States. The same van used by these two men, Graves added, was later involved in a fatal accident near Columbia, Mo., in which five persons were killed.

Adrian Barraza-Gonzalez, 33, and **Victor Alonso Medina-Perez**, 27, both Mexican nationals, were each sentenced by U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to 10 months in federal prison without parole.

On Oct. 25, 2005, **Barraza-Gonzalez** and **Alonso Medina-Perez** pleaded guilty to participating in a conspiracy to operate a business of transporting illegal aliens within the United States. They admitted that they were hired to drive illegal aliens across the United States.

In early May 2005, **Barraza-Gonzalez** and **Alonso Medina-Perez** left Los Angeles with more than 15 illegal aliens in a van. On May 5, 2005, **Barraza-Gonzalez** and **Alonso Medina-Perez** drove the van into Fairfax County, Va., transporting three other illegal aliens. All of the van's occupants were arrested, Graves said, and the van was impounded. Some time after that, however, the van was taken from the tow lot in Virginia without the permission of the authorities and transported back to California.

Graves added that, in a separate case, **Gelson Omar Mancilla-Santiago**, 22, a citizen of Guatemala, admitted that he drove the van from Los Angeles on June 17, 2005, transporting more than 17 illegal aliens. On June 19, 2005, the van was driven into Boone County, Mo., where it was involved in a single-vehicle rollover accident on Interstate 70 near Columbia, which resulted in the deaths of five of the vehicle's occupants. **Mancilla-Santiago** pleaded guilty in a separate federal indictment to conspiring to operate a business to transport illegal aliens and to

illegally re-entering the United States after having been deported. **Mancilla-Santiago** admitted that he and another person drove the van, Graves said, but **Mancilla-Santiago** claimed that he was not driving the van at the time of the accident.

A sentencing hearing for **Mancilla-Santiago** is scheduled for March 29, 2006.

These cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony P. Gonzalez. They were investigated by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Fairfax County, Va., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Columbia, Mo., Police Department and the Boone County, Mo., Sheriff's Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow